



News Release

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Mosquitoes test positive for West Nile virus: state's first are in Yakima Co.

Avoid disease by avoiding mosquito bites

OLYMPIA — A mosquito sample collected in Yakima County on Tuesday tested positive for West Nile virus providing the first sign that the virus is present in Washington this year. Monitoring and testing dead birds and mosquitoes has been ongoing around the state since June.

In 2009, 38 people in Washington became sick from West Nile virus infections. Last year we had two human cases in the state. Although there have been no human cases identified this year, people should be aware that the virus is here and can cause very serious illness. It's important to avoid mosquito bites to prevent infection. The best strategy against diseases transmitted by mosquitoes is to use bug repellent and wear long pants and sleeves outdoors when mosquitoes are active. Get rid of standing water that collects around your home. Dump water in wading pools, tires, or old flower pots. Change water in pet dishes and bird baths at least once a week; twice a week is better. Keep screens in working order to keep mosquitoes from getting in.

Most people bitten by a mosquito carrying the virus won't become ill, yet some may have mild symptoms including headache and fever that go away without treatment. For some people, West Nile virus infection can be very serious, and even fatal. Severe disease can include meningitis or encephalitis; some neurological effects of the disease may be permanent. People over 50 and those with weak immune systems are at higher risk for serious illness.

Updated [West Nile virus information](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/Zoo/WNV/WNV.html), (www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/Zoo/WNV/WNV.html) prevention tips and testing information is available online. The [Department of Health website](http://www.doh.wa.gov) (www.doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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